

# CHAPTER 2001-88

## House Bill No. 499

An act relating to holidays; creating s. 683.25, F.S.; designating December 15 as “Bill of Rights Day”; providing for a proclamation by the Governor to that effect; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution are referred to as the Bill of Rights, which limit and define the powers of government, and

WHEREAS, several of the original states refused to ratify the Constitution without an express Bill of Rights, and

WHEREAS, the Bill of Rights recognizes, affirms, and protects fundamental human and civil rights for which persons of all races have struggled for thousands of years, and

WHEREAS, the Bill of Rights secures our freedom to speak, print, read, assemble, pray, petition the government, and keep and bear arms; protects us from unreasonable arrests and searches, excessive bail, double jeopardy, coerced confessions, and cruel and unusual punishment; and secures our rights to due process, jury trials, and counsel, and to present defense witnesses, and

WHEREAS, the Bill of Rights protects our sovereign state from the excesses of the Federal Government, and

WHEREAS, the Bill of Rights is integral to the American way of life, and America celebrates a variety of civic holidays which remind us of the special contributions and sacrifices made by our forefathers and leaders to preserve, protect, and extend our freedoms, and

WHEREAS, the Bill of Rights energizes our military defense because members of the Armed Services of the United States swear an oath to preserve and defend the United States Constitution, which includes the Bill of Rights, and when American military personnel fight and die for our country, they do so to protect our rights and freedoms under the Bill of Rights, and

WHEREAS, a Bill of Rights Day would help prevent the Bill of Rights from being otherwise forgotten, and since many Americans do not know the Bill of Rights, this special day would encourage our schools to instruct children about this aspect of our American heritage, and

WHEREAS, a Bill of Rights Day would declare America’s commitment to fundamental human rights to the whole world, and

WHEREAS, just as celebrating religious holidays reminds Americans of our religious beliefs and traditions, a Bill of Rights Day would remind Americans of the manner in which our history and philosophy have secured the rights for which oppressed people everywhere still yearn, and

WHEREAS, a Bill of Rights Day would be a memorial day honoring the personal sacrifices and deaths of countless millions of people who have struggled for basic human and civil rights over thousands of years, and

WHEREAS, a Bill of Rights Day would remind all elected and appointed officials and employees of the state and local executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government that their authority and powers are limited, and

WHEREAS, a Bill of Rights Day would remind all members of government that they serve the citizens, not rule them, and that the citizens always hold the right to restrain government, and

WHEREAS, the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights deserve perennial celebrations, and the sacrifices made to protect the Bill of Rights deserve eternal remembrance, and

WHEREAS, the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution was ratified on December 15, 1791, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 683.25, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

683.25 Bill of Rights Day.—

(1) December 15 of each year is designated as “Bill of Rights Day.”

(2) The Governor may issue annually a proclamation designating December 15 as “Bill of Rights Day” and calling upon all citizens of the state to observe the occasion.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 30, 2001.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 30, 2001.